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SUBJECT: Situation of Internally Displaced Persons in Dohuk

Province, Iraqi Kurdistan

Sensitive But Unclassified

This is an Iraqi Kurdistan Regional Reconstruction Team (RRT) cable.

¶11. (SBU) SUMMARY: The majority of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Dohuk Province are from two groups: Iraqi Christians from Mosul who moved for economic reasons or fled sectarian violence; and Iraqis from Baghdad and other parts of Iraq who fled due to the security environment. The office of the Governor of Dohuk Province told us the total number of IDP families reached 9,055 or 51,749 individuals. He said the urgent needs of the IPDs are shelter and access to jobs and schools. The Governor has proposed setting up an IDP camp given the lack of public housing. The head of the Dohuk Directorate of IDPs stated also that mines pose a continuing danger for the IDPs. END SUMMARY.

¶12. (SBU) On April 3, IPA Mergy traveled to Dohuk Province to attend the monthly conference chaired by the head of Dohuk Provincial Directorate for IDPs. She also attended a meeting on IDPs hosted by the Governor of Dohuk on April 15. At both meetings, representatives from UNHCR and various non-governmental organizations were present: Middle Market Development Foundation, Mining Advisory Group, International Relief and Development, Doste Gunda, Harika, International Medical Corp, International Red Crescent Society, Quandil, and Peace Winds Japan. The goal was to coordinate support to IDPs, especially recently arrived IDPs, and to identify funding sources and recent relief projects. Participants gave an update on ongoing projects and clarified their roles and available resources.

IDP POPULATION IN DOHUK

¶13. (SBU) At the April 3 conference, a representative of the provincial government stated the following information on the IDPs in the Dohuk Province:

-- 9,055 IDP families or 51,749 individuals have arrived in Dohuk since 2005. (Note: UNHCR reports 8,436 IDP families for Dohuk Province for the same period.)

-- Most of the IDPs now in Dohuk come from Mosul (6,771 families). Many of these had lived in Dohuk during the 1970s and 1980s, had returned to Mosul, and then went back again to Dohuk.

-- There are approximately 7,300 Christian IDP families out of the total 9,055.

-- 28,998 IDPs are above 18 years old and 13,307 are under 12 years old.

-- The IDPs are stretching the capacity of the already limited number of essential services (fuel, electricity, water) and public infrastructure (schools, public housing, medical care).

-- Schools in Dohuk have up to three shifts to accommodate the additional class size. To the degree possible, schools have introduced Arabic instruction for IDP students.

-- Most of the new IDPs are living in rented facilities and will need to find alternative housing within a few months. Because of the acute shortage in shelters, a transit camp is foreseeable.

-- The city of Fayda has received more than 750 newly arrived IDPs. The provincial government and NGOs provided support and assistance: kerosene, food, and non-food items.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DEMINING FOR IDPs

¶14. (SBU) The head of the Dohuk Governorate Directorate of IDPs, Mousa Ali, said that there are three main locations of anti-personal

mines in Dohuk area: Hetit, five kilometers from the Shedadize area, Amedi district in Fayda, and Domiz. (Note: On this information, IPAO Mergy consulted with the MAG representative who attended the April 3 meeting. He told IPAO Mergy on April 29 that MAG is currently preparing a report covering these issues and will forward it to IPAO Mergy.)

POSSIBLE INCREASED DISPLACEMENT DUE TO BORDER TENSIONS

¶15. (SBU) On April 15, the Governor of Dohuk chaired a special meeting on IDPs. He said that tensions on the Dohuk-Turkish border might lead to further displacement. He believes movement will occur both southward from the border and northward from Mosul. The Governor explained that some fear a Turkish military intervention into Dohuk Province. The northward movement from Mosul, he continued, is due to generalized violence and ethnic discrimination.

MOTION TO CREATE AN IDP CAMP

¶16. (SBU) At the April 15 meeting, the Governor of Dohuk said that IDPs prefer to stay with friends or relatives rather than in a settlement area. Due to the lack of public housing and costs associated with building permanent structures, however, the Governor put forth the idea for newly arrived IDPs to be placed in a camp in one of the three following locations: Shlalat, Khorsabat or Daka. (Note: Shlalat is in Ninewa Province, not Kurdistan.) A camp set up in Shlalat, he added, would allow IDPs to remain close to educational facilities and family networks

¶17. (SBU) At the April 15 meeting, the UNHCR representative stressed the need for contingency planning and presented its key priorities in the event of major fighting along the border with Turkey that would result in large numbers of IDPs. The UNHCR Representative, however, underscored the need to integrate the IDPs rather than to create camps.

¶18. (SBU) COMMENT: The monthly IDP meetings hosted in Dohuk are well-organized and attended by UNHCR and the relevant non-governmental organizations and provincial government. This regular interaction ensures that assistance efforts are not

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duplicated among the different organizations. The NGOs and the Dohuk provincial government are not able to cover all the needs of IDPs in the areas of shelter, educational facilities, and employment opportunities.